

**Title 7**  
**Financial Town Meeting**

**CHAPTER 1**  
**FINANCIAL TOWN MEETING**

**7-1-1. TOWN MEETING TIME AND PURPOSE. [Amended 11-2-2004; 11-4-2014]**

The registered voters of the Town shall annually on the fourth Wednesday in May at 7:00 p.m., assemble in Town Meeting for the purpose of hearing official reports, ordering a tax, making appropriations and transacting any other business relating to the finances of the Town. The Financial Town Meeting shall be publicly noticed and called, and the list of registered voters shall be made out and canvassed in the same manner as provided by law in respect to elective meetings.

**7-1-2. POWERS OF REGISTERED VOTERS AT THE FINANCIAL TOWN MEETING. [Amended 11-4-2014]**

The registered voters at the Financial Town Meeting shall have and exercise the powers vested in the Town to raise by a tax upon real and personal estate such sums of money as may be required to pay Town debts and to defray the necessary charges and expenses of the Town and they also may assess, levy or impose any other taxes for the support of the Town which legally may be assessed, levied or imposed under any general or special laws which are now or may hereafter be in existence.

**7-1-3. NOTICE OF MEETINGS. [Amended 11-4-2014]**

The Town Clerk shall cause the registered voters of the Town to be notified of every Town Meeting which shall be legally called. The notice to the registered voters to meet in a Town Meeting prescribed by law shall be given by the Town Clerk issuing the Clerk's warrant, directed to the Town Sergeant or one (1) of the constables of the Town, requiring the Town Sergeant to post at least seven (7) days before the day appointed for such meeting, written notifications in three (3) or more public places in the Town of the time when and the place where the meeting is to be held and of the business required by law to be transacted therein. The warrant shall also be posted electronically on the Town's website. The notice of meetings, when called by request as hereinafter provided, shall be given in the manner provided for meetings prescribed by law, and the meetings called by request shall be held at the same time of day as those for meetings prescribed by law. At all meetings called by request only the business stated in the warrants directing the calling of such meetings shall be acted upon.

**7-1-4. NOTICE OF MEETING TO DISPOSE OF LAND OR MAKE TAX. [Amended 11-2-2004; 11-4-2014]**

No vote shall be passed in any Town Meeting concerning the disposing of the Town's land or making a tax, unless special mention be made, and notice thereof given, in the warrant issued for the public notice of such meeting; and the Town Clerk shall grant such

warrant, except in cases where the law otherwise directs, which warrant shall be directed to the Town Sergeant, or to one (1) of the constables of the Town. The notice for the making of a tax as herein provided shall be in substantially the following form:

"PUBLIC NOTICE FOR TOWN MEETING

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND<sup>1</sup> AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS COUNTY OF  
BRISTOL, SC:

By the Town Clerk of the Town of Barrington, R. I. (Seal) to \_\_\_\_\_ Town  
Sergeant of the Town of Barrington, or any of the constables of the Town.

GREETING:

Pursuant to Chapter 3 of Title 45 of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, you are hereby required to post at least seven (7) days before the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. 20\_\_ written notifications in three (3) or more public places in the Town of Barrington, Rhode Island, and electronically on the Town's website, notifying the registered voters of the Town of Barrington, qualified to vote upon any proposition to impose a tax or for the expenditure of money to assemble in Town Meeting at the Town Hall (or other place designated) in the Town of Barrington, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. 20\_\_ at 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of ordering a tax to be levied and assessed on the ratable property of the Town and the inhabitants thereof for the payment of the Town debts and interest, for the payment of the Town's proportion of the State tax, for the support of schools, for the support and maintenance of the poor, for the building, repairing and amending of highways, for the building, repairing and amending of bridges, for the improvement in any manner deemed fit of any property belonging to the Town, for all necessary charges and expenses whatsoever arising within the Town, whether incidental or not to the above (here designate any further purpose, if any, for which Town may legally appropriate money), and for any or all other purposes authorized by law, and to transact such other business as may legally come before the meeting.

Given under my hand this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. 20\_\_ at the  
Town of Barrington, Rhode Island.

\_\_\_\_\_ Town Clerk

In the event that any substantial amendments in the foregoing form shall hereafter be prescribed by amendment by General or Special Laws which shall apply to the Town, then in such case the Town Clerk shall follow the form of notice prescribed in and by such amendment.

**7-1-5. CANVASS PRIOR TO MEETING. [Amended 11-2-2004; 11-4-2014]**

Prior to any Town Meeting prescribed by law or special Town Meeting called by request in the manner hereinafter provided, the list of registered voters shall be made out and canvassed in the same manner as provided by law with respect to elective Town

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1. Editor's Note: "Land" corrected to read "Island."

Meetings.

**7-1-6. QUORUM. [Amended 11-2-2004; 11-4-2014]**

One hundred (100) registered voters at least shall be necessary to constitute a Town Meeting.

**7-1-7. MODERATOR. [Amended 11-2-2004; 11-4-2014]**

The registered voters of the Town of Barrington on the first Tuesday next after the first Monday in November biennially in even numbered years shall by ballot elect a Moderator to serve for two (2) years and until a successor is elected and qualified. The Moderator shall be a registered voter. Whenever a vacancy shall occur in the office of Moderator, by death, removal out of town, resignation, or by neglect or refusal to qualify, or for any other cause, the Council may fill the same until the next regular or special election to be held in the town; provided that if on the date and hour set for any Annual or Special Financial Town Meeting the office of Moderator be vacant or the Moderator be absent, the Financial Town Meeting may elect, by a majority vote of the registered voters, a Moderator for the time being to preside at such meeting.

**7-1-8. DUTIES OF MODERATOR. [Amended 11-4-2014]**

The Moderator shall preside in all meetings of the registered voters in the Town. The Moderator shall have the power to manage and regulate the business of each meeting conforming to law and maintain peace and good order therein.

**7-1-9. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETING. [Amended 11-4-2014]**

If any person shall act in a disorderly manner in any Town Meeting, the Moderator may order the offender to withdraw from the meeting; and, on refusal, may order the Town Sergeant, or any constable present, or any other person, to take the offender from the meeting and to confine the offender in some convenient place until the meeting shall be adjourned; and the person so refusing to withdraw shall, for each offense, be fined not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100.00).

**7-1-10. VOTING ON MOTIONS. [Amended 11-2-2004; 11-4-2014]**

The Moderator of every Town Meeting shall upon a motion being made and seconded, relative to any business before such meeting, after having heard all the registered voters thereon who shall be desirous of being heard, cause the votes of the registered voters present to be taken thereon. Whenever any question shall be pending in any Town Meeting involving an expenditure of money, or the incurring of liability by the Town, or the disposition of Town property, the same shall be taken by ballot, if a ballot be called for and the call be seconded by at least one-fifth (1/5th) of the registered voters present.

**7-1-11. MAJORITY REQUIRED FOR ACTION. [Amended 11-2-2004; 11-4-2014]**

All questions relating to Town affairs, except as otherwise provided, shall be decided by

a majority of the votes.

#### **7-1-12. RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS AS EVIDENCE -- CERTIFICATE OF CLERK.<sup>2</sup>**

A copy of the record of the proceedings of any Town Meeting, duly certified by the Town Clerk, shall be evidence of any act or vote of such Town in Town Meeting assembled, recited in such copy, and the certificate of the Town Clerk that no Town Meeting has been held to consider any subject in the certificate mentioned, or that no vote of the Town has been taken upon such subject, shall be evidence of the fact therein stated.

#### **7-1-13. COMPENSATION OF MODERATOR.**

The Moderator shall receive such compensation for services as may, from time to time, be fixed by the laws of Rhode Island.

#### **7-1-14. CALL OF SPECIAL MEETING. [Amended 11-4-2014]**

Whenever the Council, or whenever ten percent (10%) of the registered voters of the Town less any fractional part that may appear in the computation thereof, shall make a request in writing, for the calling of a Town Meeting to transact any business relating to the Town in respect of which they shall have a right to vote, and direct the same to the Town Clerk, the Clerk shall cause the registered voters to be duly notified of the time when and the place where the same is to be held, and of the business proposed to be transacted therein; provided, that the ten percent (10%) shall be computed on the total number of registered voters appearing on the last canvassed voting lists of the Town as having a right to vote in the transaction of any business that may be duly presented at such meeting. No special Town Meeting shall be called without the consent of the Council if the subject or any of the subjects proposed to be considered at such special Town Meeting, shall have been acted on by the Town at any time within six (6) months previous to the time of such proposed call.

#### **7-1-15. LIMITATIONS ON MOTIONS FOR APPROPRIATIONS. [Amended 11-21-1994; 11-4-2014; 11-3-2020]**

Except for appropriations recommended by the Committee on Appropriations, all motions in excess of \$25,000 must be presented by a registered voter to the Town Clerk at least thirty (30) days prior to the Financial Town Meeting and included within the warrant for such meeting. Further, a motion to increase or decrease an appropriation by more than \$50,000, or twenty (20%) percent of a particular line item, whichever is less, shall be filed with the Town Clerk at least five (5) business days prior to the Financial Town Meeting.

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2. Editor's Note: Spelling of "evidence" corrected.

## CHAPTER 2 COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

### **7-2-1. MEMBERSHIP AND DUTIES. [Amended 11-2-2004; 11-4-2014]**

Before adjournment of the Annual Financial Town Meeting, the meeting shall elect a committee of five (5) persons to hold a public meeting on the Wednesday two (2) weeks prior to the next Annual Financial Town Meeting at 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of hearing all registered voters of the Town interested in preparing a budget to be presented to the Financial Town Meeting and to submit a printed report of their recommendations for expenditures by the Financial Town Meeting, and the amount of tax which will be necessary to levy to pay such expenses.

### **7-2-2. QUALIFICATIONS. [Amended 11-2-2004; 11-4-2014]**

Members of the Committee on Appropriations shall be registered voters of the Town.

### **7-2-3. ELECTION. [Amended 11-4-2014]**

Any number of nominations to the Committee can be made at the meeting, and voted upon by the registered voters present at the meeting at the time for the election. In the event of the nomination of more than five (5) persons, the five (5) nominees receiving the greater number of votes shall be elected to the Committee. Members shall be elected to two-year staggered terms, beginning in May 2015, when three (3) members shall be elected for a two-year term and two (2) members shall be elected for a one-year term. In subsequent elections, members shall be elected to two-year terms.

### **7-2-4. COMPENSATION.**

The members of the Committee on Appropriations shall serve without salary, but an appropriation for their actual expenses shall be made.

### **7-2-5. VACANCIES. [Amended 11-4-2014]**

In case of a vacancy on the Committee, such vacancy shall be filled as soon as possible by the Council.

### **7-2-6. ORGANIZATION AND RULES.**

The Committee on Appropriations shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson from its membership and shall adopt its own rules and order of business.

### **7-2-7. CERTIFICATION OF DETAILED BUDGET. [Amended 11-2-2004; 11-4-2014]**

As soon after the annual Financial Town Meeting as conveniently possible, the Committee on Appropriations shall certify to the Finance Director, Town Manager, the President of the Council, and Superintendent and Chairperson of the School Committee the approved detailed budget.



CHAPTER 3  
**EMERGENCY BUDGET APPROVAL PROCESS**  
**[Adopted 11-3-2020]**

**7-3-1. TOWN COUNCIL CONDITIONAL AUTHORITY TO APPROVE BUDGET.**

Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the case of an emergency, the Town Council may vote on and approve a budget and tax levy for the town and the schools provided that the following conditions are met:

1. The Governor of the State of Rhode Island has declared a state of emergency, which emergency begins before the date for the Financial Town Meeting (FTM) and continues past the date for the FTM; and
2. The Town of Barrington has declared a state of emergency; and
3. Conditions are such that an FTM cannot be held without violating the Governor's Emergency Orders; and

**7-3-2. PROCEDURE FOR TOWN COUNCIL TO APPROVE BUDGET.**

Before approving a budget as set forth above, the Town Council shall receive from the Committee on Appropriations its Recommended Budget, and the Town Council shall hold a public hearing, which may be held remotely via virtual meeting technology, at which meeting members of the public shall be allowed to speak and make suggestions to the Town Council. Any motions to amend the budget adopted at this meeting must come from a member of the Council and must pass by a majority vote of the total Council membership. Approval of the budget must also be done by vote of a majority of the total Council membership.

**7-3-3. LIMITATIONS FOR APPROVED BUDGET AND TAX LEVY.**

If the Town Council exercises its authority under this Chapter to pass a budget in an emergency, it is limited to approving a budget and Tax Levy wherein the Tax Levy shall not exceed 102% of the previous year's tax levy.